_____ THOROUGHBREDS: A STORY OF THE TURF.

By W. A. FRASER.

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Shandy's escapade with Diablo had brought a new trouble to Mike Gaynor. boy had been discharged with evere reprimand from Mr. Porter, and cuation mark of disapproval from trainer's hornlike hand. He had departed from Ringwood inwardly swearrevenge upon everybody connected hat place; against Diablo he was par-

ghborhood to ride Diable in his Shandy's evil tongue wagged so biatantly about the horse's bad temper no lad could be found to take on in

Ned Carter might have ridden Diablo to work, but the big black was indeed a of many ideas. He had taken a by Lucretia and Lauzanne; worked alone has liked and was as awkward as a bronco of the plains. Also Diablo disliked Carter he seemed to associate his personality hat of Shandy's.

Mike's discontent over the hitch spread n Porter. It was too bad, the horses had been doing so well.

For three days Diable had no gallen. he fourth, Porter determined to ride horse himself; he could not be beaten by an ungrateful whelp like Shandy In his day he had been a famous gentlenan jick, and still was light enough to

"I don't like the idea, sir; it's not good enough," remonstrated Mike. But his master was obdurate. If Allis rode

Langarne, why shouldn't he ride Diablo? Gaynor would have ridden Diablo himself rather than have his master do so, but had a had leg. Once upon a time it had been crushed against the rail. Somebody must ride Diablo; the horse, naturally high-strung, was becoming wild with pervousness through being knocked out

During the time Shandy had been in the ter stable, he had received money from lang on for keeping the latter posted the work and condition of the Derby a didate Lucretia

For three days after his discharge he sat proceeding, with the low cunning of a forest imal, over his supposed ill-treatment.

(led drat 'em?" he murmured, "I'll even, or know why. They'll put Ned on Diablo, will they? The sneak! He emn him! They ain't got another boy I'll fix that stiff, Carter then they won't have no boy.

He drank beer, and, as it irritated his erret mind a devilish plot came into his oing and took possession of him, a plot rivy with the Ringwood stables. That night he slipped through the dark

ke a hvena pup, to Ringwood. That the stable was locked, mattered not lary times, when through laziness, Shandy and not gone to Mike's quarters for the eys, he had found lagress by a small wina foot square through which the soiled

bedding was thrown into the yard. this window, and wormed his weasel form through the small opening. He passed entered a saddle room at the further end.

The bloomin' thing used to be on the fourth peg," he muttered, drawing his small figure up on tiptoe and feeling along the wall for something. "Blow me!" and ountered the cold steel of a bit. "I'd There was a patent device of a twist and a loose ring in the centre of the bit he clutched, which Porter had devised for Diablo's hard mouth.

Shandy gave the bridle a swing, and lattered to the floor from its peg. Diablo norted and pawed the planks of his stall

"All right, my buck," hissed Shandy. You wait till to-morrow; git the run of yer life, I'm thinkin'—damn their eyes!" and he went off into a perfect torrent of imprecation against everybody at Ringwood-

Then he shut the door of the saddle room behind him, sat down on the floor, pulled from his pocket a knife and a stub of a candle. He lighted the latter and held it flame down till a few drops of tallow formed a tiny lake; in this he stuck the candle upright, shielding its flame with his coat He opened the knife, and laying it down, Inspected minutely the bridle, which lay

"It's Diablo's right enough," he said. " couldn't be mistock on the bit, nor them

etrong lines. He picked up the knife, and holding the leather rein across the palm of his left hand, started to saw it gently with the blade. Almost instantly he left off. "Of all the bloomin' ijits! God drat me for a goat! He'd feel that cut the first slip through the fingers."

He gathered in the rein until he had ! six inches from the bit. There he cut; stopping many times and doubling the leather close to the candle light, to see how deep he had penetrated.

"There, Mr. Bloody Ned!" he exclaimed at last, as inspection showed that only the outer hard shell of the leather remained uncut. "That'll just hold till the black takes one of his cranky spells, an' you give him a stiff pull. God help you then! Even this was a blasphemous cry of exitation, not a plea for divine assistance for the man he plotted against.

His next move proved that his cunnng was of an exceptional order. From his coat pocket he brought forth a pill box. n this receptacle Shandy dipped a forefinger and rubbed into the fresh cut of the leather a trifle of blackened axle-grease. ich be had taken from a wagon wheel before starting out. Thin he wiped the tein with his coat tail and looked at it ad-

b bloke won't see that, blast him!" He hing the bridle up in its place, put at h candle, dropped it in his pocket and made his way from the stable.

As he passed Diablo's stall the big black ported again, and plunged in affright. You'll get enough of that to-morrow, ed the boy. "I hope you and Ned be h break your damn necks. Fer two I'd drop something in your feed box that'd settle you right now; but it's the skunk has split on me I want to get even

house in Brookfield and went to bed. In the first gray of the early morning he arose and went out to the racecourse.

The racecourse near Ringwood had formerly been a trotting park; in fact, it was still used at irregular intervals for the hurness horses. In its primitive days a small, square, box-like structure had done duty as a judges' stand. With other improvements a new stand had been erected hundred yards higher up the stretch.

It was to the little old stand that Shandy took his way. Inside he waited for the coming of Gaynor's string of gallopers. He was as supremely happy in his unrighteous work as any evil-minded boy mith be at the prospect of unlimited mischief.

"Ned'll ride Diablo, sure-there's nothing else to it," he muttered. "I hope he breaks his blasted neck. I'll pay 'em out fer turnin' me of like a dog," he continued, savagely, the small ferret eyes blazing with fury.
"I'll learn the damn— Hello!" His sharp ears had caught the muffled sound of hoofs thudding the turf in a slow, measured walk. He peeped between the shrunken

"Yes, it's Mike. And the girl, too-blast her! She blamed me fer near bein' eaten alive by that black devil of a done horse

This ambiguous exclamation was occasioned by the sight of his former master springing into the saddle on Diablo's back "That's the game, eh? God strike me dead! I hope you git enough of him. My arms ache vet from bein' near pulled out of the sockets by that leather-mouthed brute. Gee! if the boss hasn't got spurs on! If he ever tickles the black wit' them say, boys, there'll be a merry hell to pay, and no pitch hot!"

The young Arab spoke to the boards as though they were partners in his iniquity. Then he chuckled diabolically, as in fancy he saw Porter being trampled by the horse. "The girl's on Lauzanne," he muttered; she's the best in the lot, if she did run me down. A ridin' that old crook, too, when she ought to be in the house washing dishes. A woman ain't got no more business about the stable than a man's got in the kitchen. Petticoats is the devil. I

never could abide 'em."

Shandy sometimes harked back to his early English Whitechapel, for he had come from the old country and had brought with him all the depravity he could acquire in the first five years of his existence there.

"Ned's got the soft snap in that blasted ounch," as his eyes discovered Carter on Lucretia. "He's slipped me this go; but I've nabbed the bose, so I don't care. I'm next them this trip," and as the three horses and their riders came on to the course he pulled out a silver split-second stopwatch with which Langdon had equipped him for his touting, and started and stopped several times

"You'll pay fer their feed, you damn old skin-flint—" he was apostrophizing Porter—"an' I'll be next the best they can do, an' stan' in on the rake-off. Gee! I thought they was out fer a trial," he muttered, looking disconsolately at the three Sunding on the dung heap. Shandy as they cantered the part of the journey, worked open the board slide that closed "I'll ketch 'em at the half, on the off chance," he added.

But though the timepiece in his hand stem with his thumb, as Diablo's black nozzle-showed past the half-mile post, the three horses still cantered.

Lauzanne was loping leisurely with the action of a wooden rocking-horse. Lucretia, her long, in-tipped ears cocked eagerly forward, was throwing her head impatiently into the air, as though pleading for just one strong gallop. Diablo's neck was arched like the half of a Cupid's bow, his head, almost against his chest, hung heavy in the reins tight-drawn in Porter's strong hands. His eyes, showing full of a suspicious whiteness, stood out from his lean, bony head; they were possessed of a fretful, impatient look. Froth flicked back from the nervous, quivering lips, and spatted against his black satin-skinned chest, where it hung like seafoam on holding

"Whoa! Steady, old boy!" Porter was coaxing soothingly. "Steady, boy!" "The ease up has put the very deuce into this fellow," he flung over his shoulder to Allis, who sat at Diablo's quarter. "He's

"He'll be all right, dad," she called forward, raising her voice, for the wind cut her breath; "Shandy rode him with a heavy hand, that's why."

"I'll put a rubber bit—in his mouth—to soften it—" he pumped, brokenly. "Let out a rap-girl and we'll breeze them-up the stretch; come on-Carter-get to the front-with the mare."

A quarter of a mile from the finish the horses raced into a swinging stride. Diablo was simply mad with a desire to gallop, but in the saddle was his master; no horse ever did as he wished with John Porter. Battling against the sharps, his honesty might handicap him out of the strife, but in the saddle, the elation of movement crept into his sinews, and he was superba king. As a jockey, he would have been unsurpassed. It filled his heart with delight to play with the fierce, impetuous animal he rode.

animal he rode.

"Steady, my boy—no, you don't!" This as Diablo stuck his neck straight out like an arrow and sought to hold the bit tight against the bridle teeth, that he might race at his own sweet will. Back came the right hand, then the left; three vicious saws, and the bit was loose, and Diablo's head drawn down again close to the martingale; Lucretia and Lauzanne were pulling to the front.

he front.
"Go on!" called Porter to Ned Carter: "I want to see the little mare in her stride.

Take him out at the three-quarter gallop down the back stretch. I'll be treading your heels off."

your heels off."

By this time they were opposite the old stand where hid Shandy. The boy, surmising that a gallop was on, and anxious to see them as they rounded the turn going down the back, had knocked a board loose to widen the crack. As the horses came abreast, Shandy, leaning forward in his eagerness, dislodged it at the top, and it fell with a clatter, carrying him half through the opening. The wind was blowing fair across the little stand, so the scent of the boy came to Diablo's nostrils at the same instant the startling noise reached his nervous ears. In a swerve he almost stopped, every muscle of his body trembling in fright.

bling in fright.

Porter was nearly thrown from his seat by this crouching sidestep; the horse seemed to shrink from under him. Just

With a snort he plunged forward like a

Lucretia, who had bolted when the crash Porter had lost a stirrup in the sudden twist, and the reins had slipped through his fingers as he grabbed the mane on Diablo's wither, to pull his weight back

Diable's wither, to pull his weight back into the saddle.

Now the black neck was straight and taut, flat-capped by the slim ears that lay close to the throatlatch. The thunder of his pounding hoofs reached to the ears of Lucretia and Lauzanne in front, and urged

them onward.

Carter had sat down in the saddle, and

Carter had sat down in the saddle, and taken a steadying pull at the brown mare. Even Lauzanne seemed lifted out of his usual lethargy, and wide-mouthed was pulling Allis out of the saddle.

"Curse the brute," gasped Porter, burying his knees in the saddle flaps, and searching for the dangling stirrup with the toe of his right foot. Once he aimost had it, but missed the iron swinging viciously. of his right foot. Once he almost had it, but missed; the iron, swinging viciously, caught Diablo in the flank—it made little difference; his terror was complete.

All the time Porter was kneading the dangling reins back through foreinger and thumb, shortening his hold for a strong

pull at the galloping brute's head.

"Who-o-o-a-h, who-o-a-h, steady-y-y:"
and bracing himself against the pommel,
he swung the weight of his shoulders on the

reins.

As well might he have pulled at the rock of Gibraltar. Diablo's head was up, his teeth set hard, and the man's strength teeth set hard, and the man's strength was as nothing against the full-muscled neck of the five-year-old. Diablo was cutting down the lead the other two held over him, galloping like a demon. Porter felt that he must loosen the bit and throw that set head down to get command of the horse. One flerce yank to the right and the black head swayed a trifle; another to the left and—God in Heaven! the rein to the left and-God in Heaven! the rein snapped, and its loose end came back, slashing the rider across the face. He reeled with the recoil; nearly bringing Diablo to his knees with the sudden swing

of weight on the right rein.

In an instant he was the trained horseman again and had let the remaining leather slip through his fingers a trifle.

"Go on!" he shouted to those in front;
"go on, and give me a lead. Hang to the

He realized now that the crazed brute under him must run himself out. All he could do was to sit tight and wait till Diablo had raced himself to a standstill. To use the one rein meant a crash into the rail, and surely death. Before he had thought only of the horse's welfare; now it was a matter of his own life. All that remained to him was to keep a cool head, a steady herve and wait.

Freed of restraint, not battled with, the

Freed of restraint, not battled with the black's stride lengthened, his nostrils spread wider, the hoofs pounded quicker and quicker, until the earth echoed with their palpitating beat.

The other horses heard the turmoil, and they, too, became more afraid, and teck up the med guels.

Diablo's reaching nose was at Lauzanne's hip, when Allis took one swift, backward giance. She saw the dangling rein, the set look in her father's face, the devil eyes of the horse, and for one breath-gash her heart distriction in the heart. As office she heart fluttered in its beat. As quick she put the fear from her, and swinging Lau-zanne a shade wide left Diablo more room

"On, Lauzanne!" she called through drawn lips, and hitched encouragingly in the saddle. Lucretia was still in front, her speed

mocking at the swift rush of Lauzanne and Diablo. But how the black galloped Every post saw him creeping up on the chestnut, and Allis was riding and nursing him to keep the runsway hemmed at the turns, so that he could not crash through turns, so that he could not crash through the outer rail. No one spoke again. Each knew that nothing was left to do but keep

stride, raced the brown mare, waiting till he should drop back beaten that she might take up the running with Diable. That was Carter's good judgment, and he rode as though it were the Derby, and he was tursing his mount for the last call at the falsh. finish.
At the three-quarters Lauzanne and

At the three-quarters Lauzanne and Diablo were neck and neck; at the half, the black had lapped on Lucretia; another furiong and she was laboring to keep her place, nose and nose with him. "I'm done," panted Carter, feeling the mare swerve and falter; "I'm done. God

Still there was no check in the black's

They had turned into the straight, with Lucretia a neck to the bad, when Carter heard the zirl's voice, faintly calling, "Pull out, Ned." The boy thought it fancy.

Lauranne, the despised, couldn't be there at their beals. "He heads that hear their beals." He heads the second of off long ago. But again the voice came little stronger, "Pull out, Ned!"

might be a miracle, but it was his duty to obey

As he galloped, Carter edged Lucretia to the right. Without looking back, he could feel Lauzanne creeping up between him and Diablo. Soon the chestnut's head showed past his elbow, and they were both lapped on the black. Half way up the stretch, Allis was riding, stirrup to stirrup with her father. Porter's weight was telling on Diablo.

"She's got him. Lauzanne'll hold him if he doesn't quit," Carter muttered, as he dropped back, for Lucretia was blown.

Past the finish post Lauzanne was a head in front, and Diablo was galloping like a tired horse.

"He's beat!" ejaculated Carter. "Hello! that's it. eh? My word, what a girl!"

He saw Allis reach down for the slack rein, running from her father's hand to Diablo's mouth. "Missed! She got it!" he cried, eagerly. "The devil!"

As Allis grasped Diablo's rein, the horse, with sudden fury at being drawn toward Lauzanne, his old foe, snapped at the chestnut. As he did so, thrown out of his stride, his forelegs crossed, and he went down in a heap, with the rider underneath.

The force of his gallop carried the black full over on to his back. He struggled to his feet, and stood, shaking like a leaf, with low-stretched neck and fear-cocked ears, staring at the crushed, sllent figure that lay with its face smothered in the soft

ears, staring at the crushed, silent figure that lay with its face smothered in the sof earth.

In a dozen jumps Allis stopped Lauzanne, threw herself from the saddle, and, leaving the horse, ran swiftly back to her father.

"Oh, my God! he's dead, he's dead!" she cried, piteously, the nerve that had stood the strain of the fierce ride utterly shattered and unstrung at sight of the sense.

tered and unstrung at sight of the sense tered and unstrung at sight of the sense-less form.

"He's not dead," said Carter, putting his hand over Porter's heart. "It's just a bad shake-up. Mike's coming, and we'll soon get him home. He'll be all right, Miss Allis-he'll be all right." he kept mutter-ing, in a dazed manner, as he raised her father's head to his knee.

"Take Lucretia and gallop for the doctor, Miss Allis," commanded Mike, coming up on the run. "We'll get yer father home in the buggy."

Miss Allis," commanded since, coming upon the run. "We'll get yer father home in the buggy."

"In God's mercy—don't let him die, Mike," and bending down, she pressed her lips to the cold forehead that was driven full of sand, "Get him home quick, and the late mother see. I'll take

try not to let mother see. I'll tak Lauzanne." Lauzanne had followed her and was

Lauzanne."

Lauzanne had followed her and was standing waiting, his big eyes full of a curious wonderment. Mike lifted Allis to the saddle. As he drew back his hand, he looked at it; then up at the girl.

"Don't cry, Miss," he said, struggling a little with his voice, that was playing him tricks. "Yer fadder's just stunned a bit. The dhocter'll brace him up all right."

"This is bad business," he continued, as Allis galloped on her errand, and he helped Carter lift the injured man. "There, that's roight; jist carry his legs; I'll take him under the back."

As they moved slowly toward the buggy that stood in the paddock, Diablo followed at their heels, as if he had done nothing in the world but simply taken an exercise gallep. "You black divill" muttered Mike, looking over his shoulder. "You've murthered wan av the bist min as iver breathed. If I'd me way I'd-shoot you. I'd turn you into cat'meat, that's what you're fit fer!"

"What proved the huggy, "What started. "What broke the rein?" he asked of Carter as they neared the buggy. "What started thim gallopin'?" nebody was in the old stand," Carter

replied, as, putting his foot on the step, he raised himself and the dead weight of the down in the bottom. Now you've got it. Bot' t'umbe! it's as good as an ambulance. I'll hold his head in my lap an' you drive. Here, Finn," he continued, turning to the boy who had caught and brought up Luboy who had caught and brought up incretia, "take the wee filly an' that divil's baste back to the barn; put the busted bridle by till I have a good look at it after. Go on, Ned; slow; that's it, easy does it. When we get out on the turnpike, you can slip along."

slin slong."

When they had turned into the road he spoke again to Carter; "You we'e sayin', Ned, dere was a guy in de ould stan'."

"Yes" replied Carter: "somebody was tourin' us off. A board broke, an that frightened the boss's mount."

"I t'ought I saw a b'y skinnin' off the track," commented Gaynor, harking back in his memory. "First, I t'ought it was Shandy: but what'd he be doin' there.?

in his memory. "First, I t'ought it was Shandy; but what'd he be doin' there. Did you see his face, Ned?"

"I was too busy takin' a wrap on Lu

cretia—she was gettin' a bit out of hand."

When they came to the gate which gave entrance to Ringwood house, Mike said to Carter, with rough sympathy in his voice. Slip in ahead, Ned, and tell the missis that snp in anead, Ned, and ten the missis that the boss has had a bit av a spill. Say he's just stunned, and there's no bones broke—Bot' t'umbs! though I fear he's mashed into a jelly. Ask fer a bottle of brandy, till we give him a bracer. Ned!" he called, as Carter slipped from the buggy, "see if you have hear the missis from seein, the house kan kape the missis from seein' the boss till the doctor comes. Git hould of the girl Cynthie, an' give her the tip that things is pretty bad; Go on, now; I'll drive slow wid wan hand."

wid wan hand."

Mike's kindly precautions were of little avail. Mrs. Porter saw the slow-moving buggy crawling up the broad drive and instinctively knew that again something terrible had occurred. That Allis was not

there added to her fear.

"He's just stunned, ma'am," Carter was saying, as Mike reached the steps. But she didn't hear him; her face was white, and in her eyes was the horror of a great fear, but from her lips came no cry; her silence was more dreadful than if she had

We'll carry him, ma'am," Mike said, as she came down the steps to the buggy, and clutching the wheel rim, swayed unsteadily "Jest git a bed ready, missis," Gaynor con-tinued softly: "Git a bed ready, an' he'll be all reight afther a bit. He's just stunned hat's all, just stunned!"
It was curious how the sense of evil had

limited each one's vocabulary

"Let me help," pleaded Mrs. Porter,
speaking for the first time. speaking for the first time.
"We'll carry him, missis—he's just
stunned," repeated Mike, in a dreary mono-

tone, as, feeling each step carefully with his toe, he and Carter bore the still, sensoess form into the house.

Mrs. Porter had got one of the battered hands between her own, and was walking with wide, dry, staring eyes close to her

husband.
"Oh, John, John! Speak to me. Open your eyes and look at me. You're not dead. O God! you're not dead!" she cried pas-sionately, breaking down, and a pent-up flood of tears coming to the not, dry eyes as the two men laid Porter on the bed that

as the two men laid Porter on the bed that Cynthia had made ready.

"There, Missis, don't take on now," pleaded Mike. "The boss is jest stunned, that's all; I've been that way a dozen toimes meself," he added by way of assurance. "Where's the brandy? Lift his head, Ned. Not so much. See!" he cried exultantly, as the strong liquer caused the eyelids to quiver. "See, Missis! He's all reight, he's jest stunned, that's ail. There's the doctor now. God bless the little woman! She wasn't long."

The sound of wheels crunching the gravel, with a sudden stop at the porch, had come

ith a sudden stop at the porch, had com-"Come out av the room, ma'am," Mike besought Mrs. Porter; "come out av the room an lave the dhoctor bring the boss around." their ears.

signalled to Cynthia with his eyes "Yes, Mrs. Porter," seconded Cynthia, ome out to the porch. Miss Allis and will remain here with the doctor to get

what's needed."

"Ah, a fall, eh?" commented Dr. Rathcone, cheerfully, coming briskly into the oom. Then he cau feliberately, and deliberately, and the Irishman's head tipped never so slightly toward Mrs. Porter.
"Now, 'clear the room,' as they say in court,' continued the doctor, with a smile, understanding Mike's signal. "We mustn't have people about to agitate Porter when he comes, to his senses." I'll need, Cynthia. comes to his senses. I'll need Cynthia, and perhaps you'd better wait, too, Gaynor. Just take care of your mother, Miss Allis. I'll have your father about in a

that she waited for the doctor's outcoming. Twice she cried in anguish to Allis that she must go in, must see her husband. "He may die," she pleaded, "and I may never see his eyes again. Oh, let me go, Allis, I'll come back, I will."
"Wait here, mother." commanded the

Allis, I'll come back, I will."

"Wait here, mother," commanded the girl. "Dr. Pathbone will tell us ifii..." she could not finish the sentence.

"She could not finish the sentence." ii—" she could not finish the sentence—could not utter the dread words; but, clasping her mother's hands firmly in her own, kept her in the chair. Once Mike came out and said: "He's jest stunned, ma'am, the dhoctor says he'll be all roight by-an'-by."

n'-by."
"He won't die "
"He's worth a dozen dead men, ma'am he's jest stunned, that's all!

There was another long wait; then Dr. Rathbone appeared.

"Porter will be all right, madam; it'll take time, it'll take time, and nursing. But you're getting used to that," be added with a will a wall to be added. But you're getting used to that," he added with a smile; "but——" and he looked fixedly at Allis, "he must have quiet—excitement will do more harm than the fall."

"Tell me the truth, doctor," pleaded Mrs. Porter, struggling to her feet and placing both hands on his shoulders. "I can stand it; see I'm brave."

"I've told you the truth, Mrs. Porter," the doctor answered. "There's no fear for your husband's recovery if he has quiet

the doctor answered. "There's no fear for your husband's recovery if he has quiet for a few days."

She looked into his eyes, then crying, "I believe you, doctor—thank God for his mercy!" swayed and would have fallen heavily but for Mike's ready arm.

"She'll be better after that," said the doctor, addressing Allis. "It has been and pull on her nerves. Just bathe her temples and get her to sleep if you can. I'll come back in two hours. Your father is not conscious, nor will he be, I'm thinkin', for a day or two. He has heavy concussion. Cynthia has full directions what to do."

After Dr. Rathbone had left, Mike and Carter went down to the stables.

"I'll just have a look at that broke rein," said Gaynor; "that sthrap was strong enough to hang Diablo. If there's not some dirty business in this I'll eat me hat. I'umbs up! but it was a gallop, though. The black kin move whin he wants to."

"But what do vou think of old Lauzanne?" exclaimed Carter. "He just wore Diablo down—hung to bim like a bulldog, an' beat him out."

"It was the gal's ridin'; an' Lauzanne was feared, too. He's chicken hearted—that's what he is. Some day in a race he'll get away in front av his horses, an' beat 'em by the length av a street. He'l be a hun'red to wan ,an' nobody'll have a penny on."

When they arrived at the stable Mike headed straight for the harness room. The light was dim, coming from a small high two-paned window, but Mike knew where every bridle and saddle should be. He put his hand on Diablo's headgear, and bringing it down carried it through the passage to the stable door, where he examined it minutely.

"Jest whet I t'ought! Look at that!" and he hamiled "t to Carter for inspection. "How do you size that up, Ned?"

"The rein's been cut near through," replied Carter. "I wonder it held as long as it did."

"A dirty low-down trick," commented After Dr. Rathbone had left, Mike and

replied Carter. "I wonder it held as long as it did."

"A dirty low-down trick," commented Mike. "I'll hang it back on the peg jest now; but don't use it again fer a bit."

As he restered the saddle room briskly his heel slipped on the plank floor, bringing him down. "I'd take me oath that was a banana peel if it was on the sidewalk," he exclaimed, after a gymnastic twist that nearly dislocated his neck. "Some of you fellows is pretty careless wit' hoof grease, I'm thinkin'."

More out of curiosity than anything else, he peered down at the cause of his sudden slip. "What the divil is it, onyway?" he muttered, kneeling and lighting a match,

which he held close to the spot. "Bot' t'umbs!" he exclaimed, "it's candle grease. Have aither of you b'ys been in here wit' a candle? It's agin' the rules."

"There isn't a candle about the barn, an' you know it, Mike!" cried Carter, indig-

you know it, Mike!" cried Carter, indignantly.

Mike was prospecting the floor with another light.

"Here's two burnt matches," he continued, picking them up. "An' they were loighted last night, too. See that; they're long, an' that means that they wasn't light used fer lightin' a pipe or a cigar—jes' fer touchin' off a candle, that's all. I know they was loighted last night," he said, as though to convince himself, "fer they're fresh, an' ain't been tramped on. If they'd been here fer two or three days, roight in front of the door, dey'd have the black knocked off 'em wid you boys' feet. This wan didn't light at all hardly, an there's a little wool fuzz stickin' to it—Gee! that manes some wan sthruck it on his Gee! that manes some wan sthruck it on his wool pants. Git the lentern, Ned, p'raps we'll fin' out somethin' more. The light from that high-up winder ain't good enough

When the lantern was brought Mike conwhen the lantern was brought shale continued his detective operations, nose and eyes close to the floor like a black-tracker.

"What's that, Ned?" he asked, pointing his finger at a dark, brown spot on the boards.

Carter crouched and scrutinized Mike's Roight you are, that's what it is. Not who chaws to accy in this stable?" he demanded of Carter, with the air of a cross

examining counsel.
"I don't."
"Does Finn?" "No: I don't think so."
"Didn't Shandy always have a gob of i

"Didn't Shandy always have a gob of it in his cheek—the dirty pig?"
"Yes, he did, Mike."
"I t'ought so. I t'ought it was that black-guard. But how did the swine get in here? The stable was locked, an' I had the key in me rocket. I'll teke me o'th to thet."
Carter took his cap off, ran a hand reflectively up and down the crown of his head, canvassing every possible entry there might be to the stalls. Suddenly he head, canvassing every possible entry there might be to the stalls. Suddenly he replaced his cap and whistled softly. I know, Mike; he crawled through the dung window. I've seen him do it half a dozen times. When he was too lazy to go for the keys he'd wiggle through that hole."

Mike said nothing, but led the way to the back of the stable. There he climbed up on it e pile of rollling straw and examined.

the back of the stable. There he climbed up on the pile of rollling straw and examined closely the small, square opening with its board slide through which Shandy had passed the night before.

"Jasus! I thought so!" he ejaculated.

"Here's more tobacco spit, where the cuttroat divil stood when he opened the winder."

vinder."

Looking down, his eye caught the glint

Looking down, his eye caught the glint of something bright deep in the straw He dug his hand down into the mass and brought up a knife. "Whose is that, Ned?" he queried. Carter looked at it closely. "Shandy's," he answered. "I'll swear to that I've borrowed it from him more than once to clean out the horses' hoofs."

borrowed it from him more than once to clean out the horses' hoofs."
"But' t'umbs up! I'd hang that b'y to a beam if I had him here—he cut that rein as sure as God made little apples," declared Mike, vehemently. "An' the gall av him, too, to an' sit there in the ould stand to watch the black run away wit' somewan an' kill 'em. Now, jest kape yer m uth shut, Ned, an' we'll put a hal'er o't this rooster. By hivins' whin I git him I'll rooster.

shut, Ned, an' well put a halfer of this rooster By hivins! whin I git him I'll make him squale, too."

The seriousness of Forter's accident became clearer to Dr. Rathbone the following day. He imparted this information to Allis, told her that in all probability it would be weeks before her father would be strong again. be strong again.
"In the meantime, little woman, what

"In the meantime, little woman, wha are you to do with all these hungry horse on your hands?" he asked. The girl's answer came quickly enough, for she had lain awake through all the dreary night thinking out this problem. "I'll look after them," she answered the doctor,

A smile of scepticism hovered about his full lips as he raised his eyes to the girl's face, but the look of determination of confidence that he met put his dcubts to flight. "I believe you can do it if any man can," and he put his big hand on her light and on her high the light was to flight. slight shoulder as much as to say, "I'm behind you.—I beli ve in you." Of course an inkling of Porter's condition

had to be given his wife, though the full gravity was masked. This was done by Allis, and Mrs. Porter immediately became

a prey to abject despair

The first thing to be done was to get rid
of Diablo. She was to gentle to ask that of Diablo. She was too gentle to ask that he be shot; but he must go, even if he were given away. She would willingly have dear to her were in actual peril. No wonder the good woman was rendered hysterical by the strong emotions that swayed her. by the strong emotions that swayed her.

In her depression she somewhat startled Allis, by insisting that they must send for Mr. Crane at once. After all, it was not so unreasonable; with the master of Ringwood helpless, with whom else could they consult over their entangled condition? For the past year Porter had found it necessary to keep in constant touch with the bank; so they must become familar with the

so they must become familar with the details of the entanglement. Mrs. Perter had come to have the utmost

so they must become lamilar with the details of the entanglement.

Mrs. Perter had come to have the utmost confidence in Crane's friendship and ability; he was the one above all others to have Diablo taken off their hands. So Philip Crane, to his intense delight, was summoned to Ringwood. This was his first knowledge of Porter's mishap, for he had been in New York.

Crane was supposed to possess a rare magnetism; most certainly men came under his influence with a noiseless, cheerful complaisance. It may have been that there was a slight fascination in the oblique contour of his eyes, but in reality his power lay in his exquisite finesse; people delved for him under the impression that they were laboring according to the dictates of their own sweet wills. Figuratively speaking, he twisted Mrs. Porter round his finger—and so delightfully, that she was filled with gratitude because of Crane's kindness in their hour of trouble.

The matter of Diablo was settled in a minute; he would buy the horse himself, and the price could be arranged when Mrs. Porter was able to discuss the matter—that is definitely; in the meantime he would pay a thousand for him. He understood Porter had bought him for that price. With a touch of kindly honor, Crane declared that he would have a small bet on the horse for Allis the first time he started.

Beyond parting with Diablo, Allis would not go further in the matter of selling the horses; this was the full extent of her concession to the mother. Had she known that her father had entered Diablo in the Brooklyn Handicap, she might even have refused to part with the horse. As it happened, Porter had entered both Lucretia and Diablo in the Brooklyn a day or so before his accident, but had not spoken of it.

Crane assured Mrs. Porter that she need not distract her mind over money matters, the head could accide accident the started to the started both Lucretia and Diablo accident, but had not spoken of it.

Crane assured Mrs. Porter that she need not distract her mind over money matters, the bank could easily carry their load until her husband was himself again. No matter how things turned out—it was a delicate matter to touch upon, the possibility cate matter to touch upon, the possibility of Porter's condition taking a serious turn, but coming from Crane, it seemed like an earnest of his sincerity—well, Mrs. Porter would find a friend in him quite willing and able to smooth their difficult path.

Crane had meant to defer any protestation of regard for Allis until a propitious future, but with his quick perception he saw that the rsychological moment had been moved forward by the sudden effacement of the master of Ringwood. If he spoke now to Mrs. Porter, it would give her a right to call upon his services. He would appear in the light of a debtor; it would break down barriers which might seem to exist because of their non-relationship.

Crane had not been without a suspicion that the younger man, Mortimer, might

that the younger man, Mortimer, might prove a rival; heroics such as the Diablo isode were apt to give young people romantic interest in each other. Fate a romantic interest in each other. had more than evened matters up by givhad more than evened matters up by giving him the present opportunity. He thought with some satisfaction how perfectly helpless Mortimer was in the present instance for he was most undeniably poor. It was an opportunity to be grasped; and Crane never let the tide pass its flood in the waters of his life.

So the banker spoke to Mrs. Porter of his strong love for Allis; so delicately, and with so much sincerity, that she was

and with so much sincerity, that she was

completely won over. It is true, the ground had been prepared for the seed, for the mother had long feared that Alis might become attached to some one of Porter's racing associates. Though strong in become attached to some one of Porters racing associates. Though strong in spiritual matters, the good woman was not without worldly instinct. She was pleased with Crane personally; he was not pleased with Crane personally; he was not by any means a racing man: a rich banker would make a most desirable husband for her daughter. Of course, it would rest with the girl herself—Mrs. Porter would not coerce nor influence her; but why should not Allis come to care for Crane under the influence of his streng laye? under the influence of his strong love?

Mrs. Porter's mind had rebounded from

its dazed condition after her husband's accident, and was now acute. All these thoughts came to her with rapidity, as Crane talked with masterly judgment.

To the mother's suggestion that he speak to Allis he put forward a plea of delicate consideration for the girl; he would rather deny himself; he would wait patiently until

deny himself; he would wait patiently unti-her mind was in a happier condition. Cleverly enough he knew that Mrs. Porter was now his ally, and would plead his cause with less chance of failure than if he started Allis by the sudden fronting of life's great Problem.

When Crane had gone Allis found her

mother calmed by his visit; his assurances had driven away distressing clouds of financial worry.

Almost immediately Mrs. Porter transmitted to the girl what had come to her of

"It seems almost like an answer to my prayers," she said to Allis; "not of course"—she interrupted herself—"that I've been she interrupted herself—"that I've been that the best this praying for a husband for you, but this wicked racing has warped the whole woof of my life; it seemed inevitable in the strength of its contaminating atmosphere that you would be wedded into it—though one were better dead than willingly choos

Then you've settled it, mother!" Allis's oig eyes took on a dangerous look of re edion.
"No, daughter, you must choose for your,

"No, daughter, you must choose for yourself; only you will be wise not to go contrary
to your parent's wishes. I did——"
"But you are not sorry, mother?" there
was reproach in the girl's voice.
"Not for having wedded your father;
but because of his racing life. I should
have been firmer and asked him to give it up before I married him—he might have done it then. Mr. Crane is a gentleman, Allis—that is a great deal nowadays, and he loves you most sincerely. Words often mean very little, but one can tell—at least when they've come to years of discretion they can from a man's voice whether he is in earnest or not. I suppose it is very worldly to speak of his riches, but in poverty one can do very little, very little good I had rather that you didn't have to look I had rather that you didn't have to look with misgiving into the future, Allis; it has taken much joy out of my existence. The dread of poverty is a nightmare—it wears one's life threadbare. To the young, buoved up by confidence in the rosy future, this may seem sordid; but this feeling of insecurity mars many lives which might otherwise he have.

otherwise be happy.
"You see, Allis," her mother continued "You see, Allis," her mother continued, "I know you are heart-whole, so I can't cause you any misery by my well-meant advice. You've been a good girl, and there has been nobody of your class about. Mr. Mortimer is, I dare say, a gentleman, and I must confess I was afraid that you might mistake a feeling of generosity to him for something stronger; but that was only an idle fancy, I see." It would have been unfortunate if it were otherwise, for he is fortunate if it were otherwise, for he is very poor indeed. His small salary must be all taken up in keeping himself, his widowed mother and a younger sister."

Allis gave a sudden start. She had not

known these particulars of Mortimer's life; but they carried certain explanations of his conduct. Quite casually she had formed an impression that he was penuri-ous; something he had dropped about not being able to afford certain pleasures. That was where the money went—to sup-port his mother and sister. Unwittingly her mother was pleading his

cause.

The mother's talk depressed Allis greatly.
Why should this troublesome matter core to her now when she had so much to hear. to her now when she had so much to hear, so much to do? It gave her quite a shock to find that as her mother talked, she was not thinking of Crane at all—she could not picture his face even—just the narrow-lidded eyes peeped at her in her thoughts once or twice: it would be horrible to look into them forever and ever. The face of Mortimer, pale and firm set, as it had been in that day of strife, was always obliterating the other visage. Was her mother right—was she so heart-whole?

As if her thoughts had bearing on her mother's mind, the latter said: "I wouldn't have soken to you of this matter while."

have spoken to you of this matter while your father is so ill, if it weren't for the fact that our position is very precarious. I can't understand just how badly off we

I can't understand just how badly off we are, but if anything were to happen your father, I hardly know what would become of us."

"And Mr. Crane has promised to help us if—if——" There was a hard ring in the girl's voice as she spoke, getting not past the "if," re'using to put into words the disrressing thought.

"There is no 'if' about it, daughter. Mr. Crane is our friend, your father's friend, and he is going to help us and he only spoke. and he is going to help us; and he only spoke of his regard for you by way of an excuse of his regard for you by way of an excusait was delicacy on his part, thinking that I
would have less compunction in accepting
his good offices. All I ask, girl, is that you
will try to like Mr. Crane; if you can't, well,
you won't find me making you unhappy.
But I can tell you this, Allis, unless matters

mend, and how the change is to come I can't say, your father will lose Ringwood and it will belong to Mr. Crane. Even if the horses were sold off, the money would not clear the debts; besides, I think that even the horses are encumbered."
Allis stood in indecision for a little, thinking deeply; then she went up to her mother and, taking her face in her hands,

"I understand, mother," she said, "you are worrying over the dear old place, over my future, and over father, and it is nothing but worry, worry, worry all the time. But I'll save Ringwood for you, mother. I hope father will soon be well again and that luck will charge, but anyway, mother I promise you that no matter what effort it costs me you shan't sacrifice the house you've lived in all your life."

Mrs. Porter's eyes were wet with tears of gratitude. She was thinking only of the redemption of the place through Crane; but Allis's words had meant far more than she had taken from them. They were inkissed her.

but Allis's words had meant far more than she had taken from them. They were in-spired by a faith that she could save their fortunes without sacrificing herself to Crane, if not, if she failed, she was brave, she was a Porter, and would keep her word and save Ringwood even at that

Journeying back to New York Cranc eviewed in detail his interview with Mrs.

dourneying back to New York Cranc reviewed in detail his interview with Mrs. Porter.

He congratulated himself upon his sapience in having instituted his love suit by proxy. With all his masterfulness, he was very considerably in awe of Miss Allis. There was a not-to-be-daunted expression in her extraordinary eyes, which made him feel that a love tilt with her would be a somewhat serious business. He pictured himself as an ardent lover; he would cut a droll figure in that rôle, he knew—emotions were bardly in his line. He might feel such an assertive emotion as love quite as strongly as any one in fact, did, but could he express himself with faultless consistency? He rather doubted it. His usual slow-advancing method was certainly ordained of this intricate endeavor, and he had made great progress with the mother, the one above all others to be placated; adversity, continuous as it promised to be, would probably settle Porter's influence in his favor, his tinuous as it promised to be, would probab's settle Porter's influence in his favor. his plan of action plainly was to be often at Ringwood, to familiarize the household

Ringwood, to familiarize the household with his presence; the acquiring of Diablo would facilitate that.

Diablo—a skate! He laughed to himsen over his purchase. Certainly Langdon would laugh at him, too; not openly of course—Crane wouldn't tolerate that. What an influence this girl had over him, to be sure! Any man who had endeavored to sell him a bad horse would have had a hopeless task; with but a nod of encouragement from Allis he would have bought every horse—all the useless crocks they had—the stable was full of them—Lauzanne among the rest.

among the rest.

The influence was dividing his nature into a dual one: starting into life infantile thoughts of a generous morality; an unrest of great vigor was coming to him, retri-

bution, possibly-the power to feel the difference between an avariciousness fathering dishonesty, and this new recog

on his arrival in New York he sent for

s trainer.
"I bought a horse at Ringwood-I want Langdon," he said.

you to look after him, Langdon," he said. Their man, Gaynor, will send him direct to your stables trainer's face brightened. "Did

you get Lucretia, after all? "No, I bought a big black—Diablo."

The look of delight faded from Langdon's eyes quickly. "The devil!" he exdon's eyes quickly

That's what I said; that's his name." "But he's the most uncertain brute that ever wore a set of plates. You'll get no good of him, sir; he's bad clean through. It's come down to him from his second sire, Robert the Devil, without a bit of the good, either. He'd break a man that would

"He won't break me," answered Crane, quietly; "nor you, either, Langdon—you've

quietly; "nor you, either, Langdon—you've got too much sense."
This subtle tribute mollified the trainer.
Crane proceeded. "I remember the horse quite well. Four thousand was paid for him as a yearling; as a two-year-old he was tried out good enough to win the Futurity; but when it came to racing he cut it and finished in the ruck."
That's right, "commented Langdon.

"That's right." commented Langdon.
"He owes me a good bit, that same Johnny;
his people thought him a leadpipe cinch,
and I went down the line on him, to my "Just so. You know him as well as I

do. It's a great way to get acquainted with them, isn't it, Langdon? put your money on and have the good thing go

Langdon had the highest possible opinion Langdon had the highest possible opinion of his master's astuteness and began to waver in his antipathy to Diablo.

"You think he's really good then, sir? Did he show you a fast trial?"

"I didn't even see the horse." Cransanswered, looking dreamily out of the window. "I bought him to—"he paused reflectively; he couldn't tell Langdon why he had bought him, and he hardly cared to have his prestige with the trainer.

to have his prestige with the trainer destroyed.

destroyed.

He continued, shifting in the subject matter a trifle. "You did John Porter up over Lauzanne, last summer, Langdon—"Me?" questioned the trainer. Was Crane forgetting his share in the matter. "Yes, you," affirmed the other, looking him steadily in the eye. "You sold him Lauzanne, and Lauzanne was loaded."

Langdon said nothing. What the devil was coming?

was coming?
"Well," drawled Crane, "Porter's badly burt; he's out of the race for some time to come. They're friends of mine—" "They're friends," mused Langdon; "who in thunder are they?"
"They're friends of mine, and I offered

to buy Lauzanne back just to help them out; but the old man's daughter has got the chestnut for a back, and she won't sell him. It was Diablo's fault that Porter got the fall, so they were willng to part with him, and I took the brute." This was certainly a new rôle for Crane to play. Langdon thought; his employer helping people out when they were in difficulties was a revelation. The trainer felt inclined to laugh. No doubt there was something back of it all, some tout must have given Crane information of a fast gallop Diablo had done, and he had

gone down to Ringwood to buy the horse, thinking that Porter would be selling some of his racers owing to the accident.

Langdon tried to remember what Shandy had said about Diablo, or whether the boy had mentioned his name at all.
"I wonder what condition he's in?" the

trainer remarked, questioningly "Physically, I think he's all right; it seems he galloped something under forty miles with Porter before he came a cropper. But I understand they had an imp of a boy, "Sheedy, or Shaney—"
"Shandy," corrected Langdon.
"Yes, that's the name," affirmed Crane, drawing a semicircle in the air with his cigar, "and he's a devil on wheels, by all

accounts. Diablo's no angel, as you've said, Langdon, and this boy made him a heap worse. You've handled some bad said, Langdon, and a heap worse. You've handled some back horses in your time, and know more about it than I do; but I'd suggest that you put Westley-he's a patient lad—to look after the black; give him quite a bit of work—and when you've got him right, try him and when you've got him right, try him and if he shows any out with something, and he shows any form we'll pick out a soft spot for him. Let me see, he's a maiden—fancy that, buving a four-year-old maiden!" Langdon laughed approvingly. Crane was evidently coming back to his view of

the case.

"Well, as I've said, he's a maiden, and we'll try and graduate him out of that class. It will be a great chance for a killing if we can round him into his early two-year-old form; and you can do it, Langdon, if anybody on earth can."

"Now I've got him on his reputation." thought Crane, idly brushing specks of cigar ash from the front of his coat.

"Just as I thought," mused Langdon; "the old man's got a horse after his own heart. Everybody thinks Diablo's no good, but the boss has found out something, and is on for the biggest kind of a coup."

"How's the Dutchman coming on?" asked Crane, intimating by the question that the subject of Diablo had been closed out, for the present at least.

"Great. He cleans up his four quarts three times a day, and is as big as a cart horse. I never had a better doer in my hands. If he keeps well, and I think he will, you have a great chance with him for the Brooklyn Derby."

"That's encouraging. There are some good horses in it, though. White Moth, and others. However, I'll back the Dutchman to win fifty thousand, and there'll be ten thousand in that for you, Langdon, if it comes off."

The trainer's mouth watered. Money was his god. Horses were all right as a means to an end, but the end itself was gold. Practically, he would stop at nothing to attain that end, his avaricicus mind stimulated by Crane's promise came at once to the disturbing element in the pleasant prospec', Shandy's report of Lucresia's good form.

ant prospect, Shandy's report of Lucratic's good form.

"Did you find out anything about Porter's mare Lucretia—I know White Moth's form; both fit and well, the Dutchman holds him safe over the Derby journey." "No, I didn't hear anything about Porter's mare."
"I have," said Langdon, decisively,
"I paid a boy to keep an eye on her, and he says she'll be hard to beat."
Crane frowned. "What boy?" he asked,

abruptly.

"Shandy."

"Well, just drop that; chuck that game.
John Porter has his own troubles. If he can win, let him—he can't if the Dutchman keeps well; but anyway, our own horses will keep us fully occupied."

Langdon was dumfounded. If Crane had opened the Bible and read a chapter from St. Luke he would not have been more astonished. It had occurred to him that he had expected commendation for his adroitness in looking after his master's inter-

ness in looking after his master's inter-ests. This disapprobation of such a trivial matter as the touting off of an opponent's horses was a new discovery in his master's character. Where were they at anyway? Presently Crane would be asking him to

Presently Crane would be asking him to give the public a fair run for their money each time out.

All at once light dawned upon Langdon—Crane was doubling on him. He saw it like a flash—his employer had a tout on the ground himself; that was how he had got next some good performance of Diablo's.

My, but it was clever; he could appreciate it. Crane rose in his estimation again.

My, but it was clever; he could appreciate it. Crane rose in his estimation again.

Quite humbly he answered: "Very well, it's not my funeral. I'll bring the Dutchman to the post fit to run the race of his life; if Lucretia ceats him it won't be my fault. I thought perhaps you might want to hedge a bit on Porter's mare."

"I don't think it—I'll stand the Dutchman; there are too many in to start beaking."

there are too many in to start backing them all. Let me know if the black gives

them all. Let me know if the black gives you any encouragement, and I'll see about placing him."

After Langdon had gone Crane lighted a fresh cigar and let his thoughts circle about Allis and Diablo. It would be just like the play of fate for the horse to turn out good, now that John Porter had get rid of him. When evil fortune set its hard face against a man he could do little toward making the wicked god smile, and toward making the wicked god smile, and Porter, even when he was about, was a poor hand at compelling success.